Discovery of a Potential Historic site at Potnuru in Visakhapatnam district

By

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Introduction

Potnuru is a village situated in the Padmanabham mandal of Visakhapatnam district, Andhra Pradesh. During a recent field exploration, mound was identified just 100 meters from the riverbed of the Gosthani River. This location is highly significant as the Gosthani River has historically played a central role in shaping settlement patterns, supporting agrarian life, and enabling trade routes, particularly during the Early Historic and Buddhist phases in North Coastal Andhra. The region is already known for several important Buddhist and Early Historic sites, and Potnuru now adds to that growing list of culturally significant locations.

Stratigraphy and Soil Composition

The mound at Potnuru rises approximately five feet above the surrounding ground level and exhibits a clearly stratified soil profile. The uppermost layer comprises reddish-brown loamy soil with signs of vegetation. Beneath this are compact bands of darker clay mixed with gravel and nodules. Notably, pottery sherds were found uniformly from the surface down to the base of the mound, demonstrating that the site experienced sustained or repeated human occupation across centuries. The absence of sterile layers indicates a continuity of habitation without major abandonment episodes. Such stratified deposition of cultural material, especially ceramics, is a critical marker for identifying historically occupied sites.

Potsherds observation

Potsherds were collected from various depths of the mound, with a significant number representing the Black Ware and Black-and-Red Ware ceramic traditions. The fragments include thickened rims, curvilinear body pieces, and flat bases, indicating a range of functional vessels used for cooking, storage, and possibly ritual purposes. Many sherds exhibit decorative features such as parallel grooves, incised lines, cross-hatching, and cord-impressed motifs. Several pieces have soot marks, especially on their inner surfaces, suggesting they were exposed to fire or used for food preparation.

Potsherds were found with multiple designs	Black ware potsherds were found

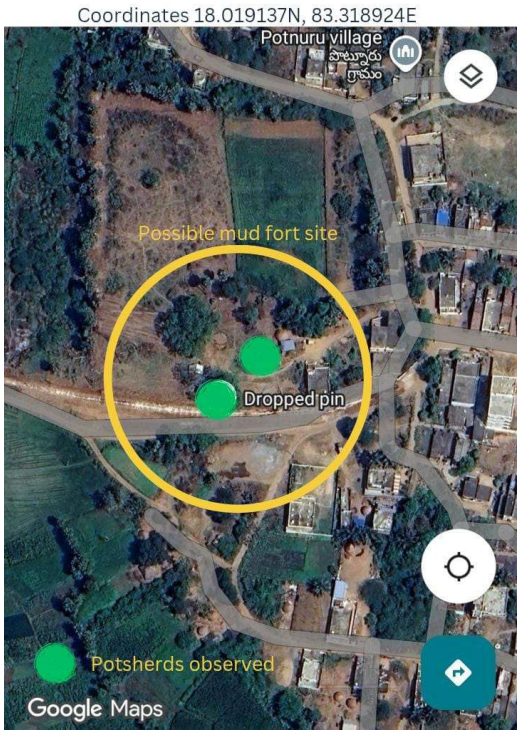
Cultural Significance and Historical Interpretation

The material culture recovered from the Potnuru mound clearly points to a long-term habitation site with cultural continuity. Its location near the Gosthani River further supports the idea that it was integrated into a network of settlements that flourished due to agricultural prosperity and access to inland and coastal trade routes. The pottery forms, decorative styles, and firing techniques suggest that the site was active during the Early Historic period, possibly extending into the Early Medieval era. This continuity of occupation and cultural practice links Potnuru with the broader Buddhist and mercantile traditions of the region, indicating it may have served as a satellite habitation or production center connected to nearby Buddhist monastic complexes.

There is Need for further study: The preliminary observations at Potnuru highlight the urgent need for detailed archaeological investigation.

- Stratigraphic excavation and ceramic classification
- Scientific dating methods such as thermoluminescence, thermal scanning or C14 could help establish the chronological framework of the site.
- Additionally, Geospatial documentation using GPS and drone mapping can help define the full extent of the mound and its relationship with nearby features.
- Engagement with local villagers through oral history collection might also uncover place-based memory, traditional knowledge, or undocumented legends related to the site as mud fort.
- Given its strategic location, well-preserved stratigraphy, and rich ceramic material, Potnuru deserves immediate attention from academic institutions and heritage management bodies.

Here's the map of the site which was found in Potnuru outskirts :



Mound up to 5ft of height is observed	Mound up to 5ft of height with different layers of soil
Potsherds were found inside the mound	Potsherds found below 5ft from the mound level

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